

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 1, 3, 7, 8, 11, 16, 18, 21, 22, 25-29, and 34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,286,060 to DiGiorgio et al. (DiGiorgio), claims 2, 17 and 30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over DiGiorgio in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,499,069 to Shimura (Shimura) and claims 4-6, 12-15, 19, 20 and 31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over DiGiorgio in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,053,646 to Higuchi et al. (Higuchi). In this response, Applicant has canceled claims 1-8, 16-22 and 29-31 without prejudice, amended claims 9, 11, 23, 25, 26, 32 and 34 and added claims 35-44. Upon entry of the amendments, claims 9-11 23-28 and 31-48 will be pending in the Application.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging the allowable subject matter of claims 9, 10, 23, 24, 32 and 33. Applicant has amended claim 9 to include the limitations of independent claim 1 and previously intervening claims 7 and 8. Claim 10 remains dependant on claim 9. Applicant has amended claim 23 to include the limitations of independent claim 16 and previously intervening claims 21 and 22. Claim 24 remains dependant on claim 23. Applicant has amended claim 32 to include the limitations of independent claim 29 and previously intervening claim 31. Claim 33 remains dependant on claim 22. In view of these amendments, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 9, 10, 23, 24, 32 and 33 are now allowable form.

Claim Amendments

Applicant has canceled claims 1-8. Claims 2-6 have been redrafted as new claims 36-40 each of which ultimately depends from allowable claim 9. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 36-40 are allowable for at least the reason that claim 9 is allowable.

Applicant has amended claims 11-15. As amended, each of claims 11-15 ultimately depends from allowable claim 9. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 11-15 are allowable for at least the reason that claim 9 is allowable.

Applicant has canceled claims 16-22. Claims 17-20 have been redrafted as new claims 41-44 each of which ultimately depends from allowable claim 23. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 41-44 are allowable for at least the reason that claim 23 is allowable.

Applicant has amended claims 25 and 26. As amended, each of claims 25-28 ultimately depends from allowable claim 23. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 25-28 are allowable for at least the reason that claim 23 is allowable.

Applicant has canceled claims 29-31. Claim 30 has been redrafted as new claim 35 which depends from allowable claim 32. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 35 is allowable for at least the reason that claim 32 is allowable.

Applicant has amended claim 34. As amended, claim 34 depends from allowable claim 32. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 34 are allowable for at least the reason that claim 32 is allowable.

No new subject matter is added in the amendments to the claims.

The §102 Rejections

Applicant has canceled claims 1, 3, 7, 8, 16, 18, 21, 22 and 29. Claims 11 and 25-28 have been amended to depend from allowable claims. New claims 35-44 depend from allowable claims. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that the §102 rejections are moot and should be withdrawn.

The §103 Rejections

Applicant has canceled claims 2, 4-6, 17, 19, 20, 30 and 31. Claims 12-15 have been amended to depend from allowable claims and new claims 35-44 depend from allowable claims. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that the §103 rejections are moot and should be withdrawn.

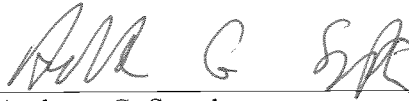
CONCLUSION

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition of allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number 033975. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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